

Hajong language

Hajong, originally a Tibeto-Burman language,^[4] is now considered an Indo-Aryan language with Tibeto-Burman roots. It is spoken by approximately 80,000 ethnic Hajongs across the northeast of the Indian subcontinent, specifically in the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, and West Bengal in present-day India, and the divisions of Mymensingh and Sylhet in present-day Bangladesh. It is written in the Bengali-Assamese and the Latin scripts.^[2] The Hajongs originally spoke a Tibeto-Burman language, but it later mixed with Assamese and Bengali.^[5]

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Old Hajong

The language now spoken by the Hajong people may be considered an Indo-Aryan language, due to language shift from a Tibeto-Burman language. Old Hajong or **Khati Hajong** may have been related to Garo or Bodo languages, i.e. - of Tibeto-Burman origin. Words in Hajong like *Mao/A'ya'*(mother), *Bap/Baba* (father), *Abu* (grandmother), *Ajo* (grandfather), *dada* (elder brother), *ba'i* (elder sister), *nunu* (younger siblings), *bunu* (brother-in-law), *bhuji* (sister-in-law), *gang* (river), *gap* (colour), *dang'o* (big),*buwai* (to plough), *khar* (soda), *dyao* (Spirit or deity), *jiu* (Spirit or life), *bato* (parrot), etc. are of Tibeto-Burman origin.

Variations

Hajong	
হাজং ভাষা <i>Hajong Bhasa</i>	
Pronunciation	[ha.dʒɔŋ]
Native to	India and Bangladesh
Region	Meghalaya, Assam, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and West Bengal in India <p>Mymensingh, Sherpur and Sunamganj in Bangladesh</p>
Ethnicity	Hajong
Native speakers	71,800 (2011) ^[1] <p>8,000 in Bangladesh (no date)^[1]</p>
Language family	<div>Indo-European <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indo-Iranian<ul style="list-style-type: none">Indo Aryan<ul style="list-style-type: none">Eastern<ul style="list-style-type: none">Hajong</div>
Dialects	Doskina' <p>Korebari</p> <p>Susung'ya'</p> <p>Barohajarya'</p> <p>Mespa'rya'</p>
Writing system	Bengali-Assamese script, Latin script ^[2]
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	haj
Glottolog	hajo1238 (http://glottolog.org/resource/lan

The Hajong Language varies within the clans because of regional variations. There are five notable clans of the Hajong people.

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38)^[3]

- Doskine'
- Korebari
- Susung'ye'
- Barohajarye'
- Miespe'rye'

Writing system

The Hajong language is written using both the Latin and the Assamese scripts.^[6] Although both of these scripts are in use in India, the Hajongs in Bangladesh expect to use the Bengali script since most education is in Bengali medium.^[7] Often, for writing Hajong, the Assamese script is used. In each script, there is one added unique symbol for the close, back, unrounded vowel /ɯ/. In Latin script, it is written with "â" or simply *a'* or *e'*. In Eastern Nagari script with "ঔ" when it is syllable final.^[8]

Phonology

Hajong has 23 consonant phonemes, 8 vowel phonemes, and 2 approximants which have some characteristics of consonants namely /w/ and /j/ which act as diphthongs. The vowel phonemes are /a/, /i/, /u/, /e/, /ɛ/, /o/, /ɔ/ and /ɯ/ (close, back, unrounded). Unlike other Indo-Aryan languages, Hajong language has only one 'i' and 'u'. It is somewhat ambiguous whether the final vowel is a phoneme or an allophone of [a] in the environment of other close vowels.^[8] The extra vowel /ɯ/ is not present in other Indo-Aryan languages, but is typical for the Tibeto-Burman family.^[9] Codas *j* and *ch* in the final position of a syllable turns into an s sound. The phonology of Hajong includes some vowel harmony and the devoicing of final consonants.^[8] For separating syllables the apostrophe sign (') or hyphen (-) is used.

Consonant phonemes

Consonants	Example	Meaning
Velar		
k	kan	ear
kh	khawa	food
g	gang	river
gh	ghor	house
ng	gang	river
Dental		
t	tula	your
th	tho	keep
d	dang'o	big
dh	dhor	hold
n	nak	nose
l	tel	oil
s	sor	move
r	rang'a	red
Palatal		
ch	cha	tea
j	jor	fever
jh	jhala	spicy
sh	shongko	conch
Bilabial		
p	pukhi	bird
ph	phol	fruit
b	bak	tiger
bh	bhou'i	field
m	mao	mother
Glottal		
h	hilde'	yellow

Vowel phonemes

IPA	Latin	Assamese	Pronunciation
/a/	a	আ	a of car
/i/	i	ই	i of kill
/u/	u	উ	u of put
/ɛ/	e	এ	a of thank
/e/	ei	ঐ	ay of say
/o/	ou	ঔ	o of old
/ɔ/	o	অ	eo of George
/ʊ/	e'	ঔ	i of girl

Vowels play an important role in changing the meaning of words and the grammatical structure of sentences. Unlike other Indo-Aryan languages like Assamese and Bengali, there is no distinction between longer and shorter /i/ and /u/. The Assamese script lacks some vowels unique to Hajong phonology, which is gradually leading to a vowel shift. And since vowels play an important role in the grammar of this language, the grammatical structure of the language is also changing.

Diphthongs

Hajong phonology has diphthongs which are iotized vowels with j(y) and w. Diphthongs are usually combinations of i or u with other vowel phonemes. Common examples of diphthongs are **ya**, as in **Dyao** which is the combined form of i and a; **wa**, as in **khawa** which is the combination of u and a; **yuh**, as in **muh'yuh**, combination of i and uh, and **wuh**, as in **tuhwuhi**, combination of u and uh.

Grammar

Hajong language primarily has a canonical word order of Subject–object–verb. A subject–object–verb (SOV) language is one in which the subject, object, and verb of a sentence appear or usually appear in that order. Hajong language has a strong tendency to use postpositions rather than prepositions, to place auxiliary verbs after the action verb, to place genitive noun phrases before the possessed noun and to have subordinators appear at the end of subordinate clauses. Hajong is an agglutinative language. Words are often combined and compressed, often there are no pauses between words until the sentence ends. Even though it is considered an Eastern Indo-Aryan language, Hajong does not conjugate verbs in the same way Bengali or Asamiya do, but rather has a simplified system. The case endings in Hajong are also unique compared to other Indo-Aryan languages and may represent affinity with Tibeto Burman languages.^{[10][11]} The following table is taken from Phillips:^[11]

Hajong	Hajong (in IPA)	English	Case
বুৰি-ৰী	<i>burī-rw</i>	the old woman	unmarked
বুৰি-ৰীগে	<i>burī-rwge</i>	to the old woman	dative
বুৰি-লী	<i>burī-lw</i>	of the old woman	genitive
বুৰি নি	<i>burī ni</i>	to/at the old woman	locative
বুৰি ভায়	<i>burī b^ha j</i>	to the old woman	allative
বুৰি থিকি	<i>burī t̪^hiki</i>	from the old woman	ablative
বুৰি দিঅী	<i>burī diw</i>	through/by the help of the old woman	instrumental

The genitive and unmarked or accusative cases have two forms; re'/ra and le'/la. For words ending with the vowels /a/, /ɛ/ and /ɔ/ it becomes ra and la and for /i/, /u/, /e/, /o/ and /ʊ/ it becomes re' and le'. The vowels /ɛ/(e) and /ɔ/(o) are used to end interrogative sentences, like 'Bhat khase?'(have you taken your food?) and 'Bhat khabo?'(Do you want to eat?); and the vowels /e/(ei) and /o/(ou) are used at the end of declarative sentences, as in 'Bhat khasei.'([I] have taken my food.) and 'Bhat Khabou'([I] will eat.). Adding the suffix be' or ba to interrogative words turn them into indefinite pronouns; for example, kibe' means something, kei'be' means someone, kumaba means somewhere and also ke'ibe', kageba, kunde'be' and kalaba means 'I don't know who/whom/which/who's' respectively in English. Similarly adding the suffix ha and ga to verbs means 'come and (verb)' and 'go and (verb)' respectively; for example, khaha means come and eat, niha means come and take; khaga means go and eat and niga means go and take.

Honorifics

A unique feature of Hajong language is the use of honorifics. When talking about someone superior in status, a speaker usually uses special nouns or verb endings to indicate the subject's superiority. Unlike Assamese, Bengali, Sylheti and other Indo-Aryan languages, there is no word like আপুনি/আপনি/আপুনি(apuni/apni/apne) to substitute *you*. Instead, Hajong has a different way to indicate supremacy of the other person. For elders and other higher ranking, people second person and third person pronouns are never used. One always has to refer an elder with their name or their honorary title. Ending words with 'ge' and 'ha' is also a form of showing respect to the other person.

Example short phrases

Hajong Phrases	Hajong Latin Script	Meaning
কুমায় জায়?	<i>kumai jai?</i>	Where are you going?
কিংকী আছে?	<i>king'ke' ase?</i>	How are you?
তই আহিলে? ভিতুৰ ভায় আয়।	<i>Toi ahile? Bhiturbai ai.</i>	You came? Come inside.
তুলা আহাৰা ভাল হুছে।	<i>Tula ahara bhala husei.</i>	It was good of you to come.
ভাত খাছে?	<i>Bhat khase?</i>	Have you eaten?
চা খাবো?	<i>Cha khabo?</i>	Will you take tea?
তই কুন গাওলা?	<i>Toi kun gaola?</i>	What village are you from?
মই তাঙাবাৰিলী।	<i>Moi Tang'abarile'.</i>	I am from Tangabari.
ইলা তই কুমায় থাকে?	<i>Ila toi kumai thake?</i>	Now where do you live?
তুলা ঘৰৰা কুমায়?	<i>Tula ghorra kumai?</i>	Where is your house?
মুলা ঘৰৰা হাৱাখানানি।	<i>Mula ghorra Hawakhanani.</i>	My house is in Hawakhana.
ইদৌ অগে বুজিয়ৌ দি।	<i>Ide' oge bujye' di.</i>	Explain this to him.
ইদৌনি লিখিক।	<i>Ide'ni likhik.</i>	Write it here.
ময় জাং।	<i>Moi jang.</i>	I'm going.
আবাৰ লাক পাবো।	<i>Abar lak pabou.</i>	We will meet again.

Notes

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6. Script Source (http://scriptsource.org/cms/scripts/page.php?&item_id=language_detail&uid=d9h6e99bbg)
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